

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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OC-05 CCO-00 OPIC-03 TRSE-00 /082 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4030

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5044

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZEVEDO PRIME MINISTER; GONCALVES ARMED FORCES

CHIEF

REF: LISBON 5043 DTG 292100Z AUG 75

SUMMARY: PRESIDENCY ANNOUNCED DECISION AUGUST 29 (A) NAMING  
ADMIRAL PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO TO BE PRIME MINISTER; (B) MOVING  
GONCALVES TO KEY POSITION OF CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES;  
(C) AND CONVOKING AFM ASSEMBLY FOR SEPTEMBER 5 TO RESTRUCTURE  
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. ANTUNES GROUP AND OTELO STRONGLY  
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RESISTED MOVE; THOUGHT THEY HAD CONVINCED PRESIDENT AND

AZEVEDO: BUT IN END WERE DISREGARDED. ALTHOUGH GONCALVES HAS BEEN OUSTED FROM PRIME MINISTERSHIP, THIS IS LITTLE MORE THAN AN OPTICAL ILLUSION. COMMUNISTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS PRAISING DECISION AS DEFINITIVE SOLUTION TO CURRENT CRISIS. OPPOSITION TO GONCALVES AND HIS COMMUNIST SUPPORTERS HAS BEEN DEALT SERIOUS BLOW. END SUMMARY.

1. OFFICE OF PRESIDENCY ISSUED COMMUNIQUE AT 10:40 P.M.

AUGUST 29:

--NAMING ADM PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO PRIME MINISTER.

--NAMING GONCALVES CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES.

--CONVOKING AFM GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR SEPTEMBER 5 TO CONSIDER RESTRUCTURING OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

2. DECISION REFLECTED IN COMMUNIQUE CAME AFTER TWO DAYS OF VIRTUAL AROUND THE CLOCK DELIBERATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE RULING DIRECTORATE AND THE COUNCIL OF THE REVOLUTION MINUS THE MELO ANTUNES NINE. SCENARIO WAS AS FOLLOWS:

3. MARATHON MEETING AUST 28-29 PRODUCED TENTATIVE SOLUTION. AT 2A.M. TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WAS REACHED. ONLY COPCON COMMANDER GEN. OTELO SRAVIA DE CARVALHO HELD OUT AGAINST MOVE OF GONCALVES TO CHIEF OF STAFF POSITION; OTELO PROPOSED DIRECTOR OF ENGINEER CORPS AS ALTERNATIVE. OTELO ARGUED THAT GONCALVES WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED BY THE ARMED FORCES AND THAT HIS CONINUED PRESENCE IN SUCH MAJOR POSITION WOULD BE DIVISIVE. AIR FORCE CHIEF MORAIS E SILVA ABSTAINED GIVING AS REASON HIS IMPENDING RETIREMENT.

--BETWEEN TWO AND FIVE A.M. AUGUST 29, MEMBERS OF MELO ANTUNES GROUP URGED PINEHEIRO DE AZEVEDO NOT TO ACCEPT PRIME MINISTERSHIP. ANTUNES GROUP ARGUED THAT GONCALVES AS CHIEF OF STAFF AND EXCLUSION OF NINE FROM DECISION WOULD ENSURE FAILURE OF NEW GOVERNMENT UNDER AZEVEDO.

4. MEANWHILE, OTELO AND FABIAO WERE TAKING SOUNDINGS AMONG UNITS RE ACCEPTABILITY OF GONCALVES AS CHIEF OF STAFF. LATE AFTERNOON AUGUST 29 THEY MET WITH REGIONAL COMMANDERS CHARAIS AND PEZARAT CORREIA AND KEY TROOP COMMANDERS IN LISBON AREA. REPORTS FROM VARIOUS UNITS WERE DISCUSSED. SOUNDING REFLECTED CONFIDENTIAL

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STRONG ANTI-GONCALVES SENTIMENT.

5. UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS WERE MADE EARLY AFTERNOON AUGUST 29 TO CONVINCE FABIAO TO RECONSIDER HIS DECISIO NOT TO TAKE ON PRIME MINISTERSHIP. GROUP OF NINE, LED BY ANTUNES, CALLED ON PRESIDENT SAME AFTERNOON IN ATTEMPT TO GET HIM TO RECONSIDER HIS SUPPORT FOR THE AZEVEDO-GONCALVES FORMULA. THEY LEFT FORMAL PROTEST STATEMENT NOTING THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN INVITED

TO PARTICIPATE IN DELIBERATIONS LEADING TO TENTATIVE DECISION DESPITE FACT THAT THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN REINTEGRATING INTO RC BY DECISION OF DIRECTORATE. THEY REMINDED PRESIDENT THEY REPRESENTED SENTIMENTS OF 80 PERCENT OF THE ARMED FORCES. THEY CONCLUDED INTERVIEW BY DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES FROM ANY DECISIONS WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN WITHOUT THEIR PARTICIPATION AND SPECIFICALLY FROM POSSIBLE DESIGNATION OF GONCALVES AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF.

6. ANTUNES GROUP AND OTELO CONTINUED EFFORTS ON INTO AFTERNOON AUGUST 29 TO TURN PRESIDENT AROUND. BY EARLY EVENING THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD WON. AT THAT POINT THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD BOTH PRESIDENT AND AZEVEDO CONVINCED. IT LOOKED LIKE GONCALVES WAS OUT ENTIRELY (SEE REFTEL).

7. BETWEEN NINE AND ELEVEN P.M. THE SITUATION TURNED AROUND AGAIN. THE PRESIDENT REFUSED TO MOVE FROM HIS SUPPORT OF THE ORIGINAL FORMULA; AZEVEDO STAYED WITH HIM. BRIG. CORVACHO'S UNEXPECTED RETURN TO OPORTO WHERE HE ADDRESSED POPULAR UNITY FRONT RALLY WAS ADVANCE WARNING THAT EFFORTS OF ANTUNES GROUP AND OTELO HAD FAILED.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH GONCALVES HAS BEEN OUSTED FROM THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP, THIS IS LITTLE MORE THAN AN OPTICAL ILLUSION. THE PRESIDENT HAS CEDED TO HIM A MAJOR PERHAPS EVEN KEY, PORTION OF HIS OWN POWER. AZEVEDO, WHILE NOT A COMMUNIST, IS WEAK AND OWES HIS POSITION TO COMMUNIST-LINING SUBORDINATES WITHIN THE NAVY. (SEPTTEL ON AZEVEDO BIO FOLLOWS). THUS OVERALL SITUATION IS AS BAD AS IT WAS BEFORE, IF NOT WORSE. IT IS HARD FOR US TO OBJECT TO THE HIGHLY PRO-NATO AZEVEDO, AND GONCALVES CAN WORK AT PENETRATING THE MILITARY. REACTION OF COMMUNIST LINING PRESS HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY POSITIVE AND PCP AND IT'S SATELLITE MDP HAVE SUPPORTED THE MOVE. THE ANTUNES GROUP IS IN A STATE OF DISARRAY AND CLEARLY FEELS IT HAS LOST AN IMPORTANT  
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BATTLE IF NOT THE WAR. (SEPTTEL ON REACTION AND PLANS OF ANTUNES GROUP FOLLOWS).  
ONE OF FIRST RESULTS OF THIS CHANGE IS LIKELY TO BE RESURGENCE OF INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT ACTIVITY IN AZORES AND MADEIRA. AZORES INDEPENDENCE MOVE COULD BE TRIGGERED AND MADEIRA WOULD NOT BE FAR BEHIND.  
CARLUCCI

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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